In the Claims:

Cancel claims 13-17 without prejudice.

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Amended) Organ stabilizing apparatus comprising:

a contact member disposed for contacting an organ;

a support structure attached to the contact member and including a plurality of ball elements and interposed ring elements including contiguous engaged surfaces assembled in an extended array, each of said ball and ring elements including an internal bore therethrough, and including a flexible tensioning element within the internal bore disposed to exert compressive force on the assembled array of ball and ring elements to form a rigid support for the contact member in response to tensioning the flexible member within the internal bore, each of the ball elements including a segment of substantially spherical configuration at each end thereof; and

each of the ring elements including at each of the ends thereof a plurality of stepped edges oriented in concentric array at different radii from a central axis of

the internal bore therethrough in an array of such edges along the central axis that form discontinuous contact surfaces arrayed about a substantially spherical configuration to form the contiguous engaged surface thereof in mating engagement with the spherical segment of a mating ball element.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously Amended) Organ stabilizing apparatus comprising:

a contact member disposed for contacting an organ;

a support structure attached to the contact member and including a plurality of ball elements and interposed ring elements including contiguous engaged surfaces assembled in an extended array, each of said ball and ring elements including an internal bore therethrough, and including a flexible tensioning element within the internal bore disposed to exert compressive force on the assembled array of ball and ring elements to form a rigid support for the contact member in response to tensioning the flexible member within the internal bore, each ball element including a segment of spherical configuration at each end thereof forming the contiguous engaged surface thereof for mating with a contiguous engaged surface of an adjacent ring element, and including a shoulder extending radially outwardly from the central bore to a dimension greater than the maximum radius of the segment of spherical configuration for abutting an adjacent

ring element to limit angular orientation of the ball element relative to an adjacent ring element.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Amended) Organ stabilizing apparatus as in claim 7 in which each of the ring elements is formed of a resilient material.

10. (Previously Amended) Organ stabilizing apparatus as in claim 7 in which each ball element is formed substantially as a spheroid including an equatorial band at greater radius than the spheroidal radius and oriented substantially coaxial to a central axis of the internal bore.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously Amended) Organ stabilizing apparatus as in claim 7 in which the contact member is attached to the tensioning element and is disposed in rotatable orientation within a mating lateral groove in a distal end of the assembled array of ball and ring elements for angular adjustment of the contact member about an axis transverse to the tensioning element.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Cancelled)